

## HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING: LICENCE FEES AND CHARGES 2024/25

Licensing Committee – Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2023

**Report of:** Chief Officer Planning & Regulatory Services

**Status:** For Decision

**Key Decision:** No

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr. Margot McArthur

**Contact Officer:** Susan Lindsey Ext.7491

**Recommendation to Licensing Committee:**

That,

- a) having taken into account the information provided by the Senior Licensing Officer, increases to the fees set out at Appendix A be subject to a 6 week public consultation process;
- b) if, following consultation, there are no adverse comments to the proposed levels, the proposed fees and charges be implemented from 1 April 2024; and
- c) if, following consultation, there are adverse comments to the proposed levels, a further report be brought back to the Licensing Committee for consideration.

**Reason for recommendation:**

To ensure that the Council complies with its statutory duty to ensure that the 'taxi licensing' service remains self-financing, in accordance with the Council's Service and Budget Plan.

### Introduction and Background

1. The taxi licensing service is required to be self-financing and the proposed increases to fees will ensure this is maintained.
2. Careful monitoring of income and expenditure has been carried out over the current financial year and the income from licence fees and associated costs,

together with expenditure has been in accordance with the objectives laid out in the budget plan.

3. The type of tasks involved in taxi licensing include:
  - a) Assistance and advice to applicants
  - b) Compliance checks in line with Policy including criminal checks
  - c) Checking and validating licence applications upon receipt
  - d) Final approval of applications and the processing of licences
  - e) Keeping updated records and registers
  - f) Enforcement of drivers, operators and vehicles
  - g) Arranging and attending Hearings.
  - h) Appeal preparation and court attendance at appeal
  - i) Training of Officers and Members
4. Total income for Income and expenditure for the year 2022-23 result in a credit position of £10,900 (this is higher than predicted due to Government Grants received to the sum of £6,043.06).
5. It is proposed that the main application fees remain the same with some amendments only to the 'additional costs'. The main application fees (especially for drivers and operators) should remain consistent over the 3 year period of a driver licence, and a 5 year period for an Operator licence in order to balance the income across the lifetime of these licences issued.
6. There will be an increased cost incurred to the service over the current period and the period 2024-25 due to potential pending National Pay Awards, and additional resource provided within the Licensing Hub Team. We predict that this will balance the credit position at the end of 2024-25.
7. Officers have calculated and included fees for a 1 year driver licence. Under normal circumstances a 3 year licence should be issued, but in some circumstances it may be more beneficial to either an applicant or to the Authority that a one year licence is issued (ie. a driver may be looking to retire prior to the expiry of a 3 year licence, or medical issues raised which need re-assessing after 1 year). One year licences will be issued on a case by case basis at the discretion of an Officer.

## **Key Implications**

### Financial

The cost of licence fees takes into account the need to maintain a 'self financing' position for the service.

### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

Should parts of the industry believe the Authority's fees are at a level which is greater than the costs of the statutory function, then it is open to them to undertake a 'judicial review proceeding'. Should this arise, the Authority would need to evidence how it arrived at the fee levels to demonstrate that they have been calculated on a cost recovery basis only.

### Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

### Net Zero Implications

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the council's ambition to be Net Zero by 2030. There is no perceived impact regarding either an increase or decrease in carbon emissions in the district, or supporting the resilience of the natural environment

#### **Appendices**

Appendix A – Proposed fees and charges 2024-25

Appendix B – Current fees and charges 2023-24

#### **Background Papers**

None

**Richard Morris**  
**Chief Officer Planning and Regulatory Services**